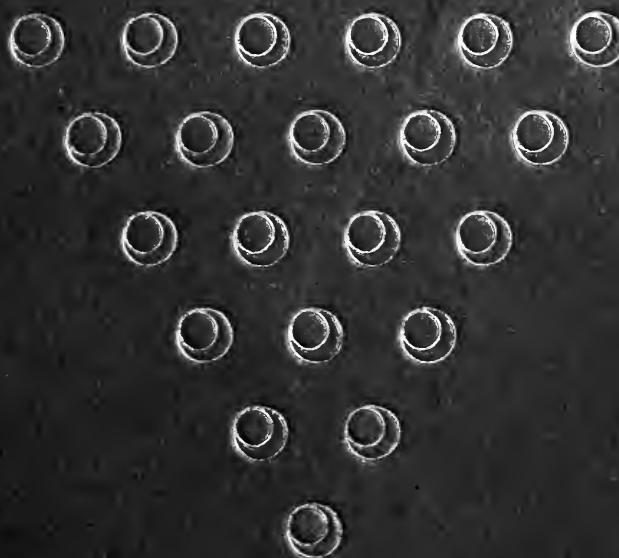




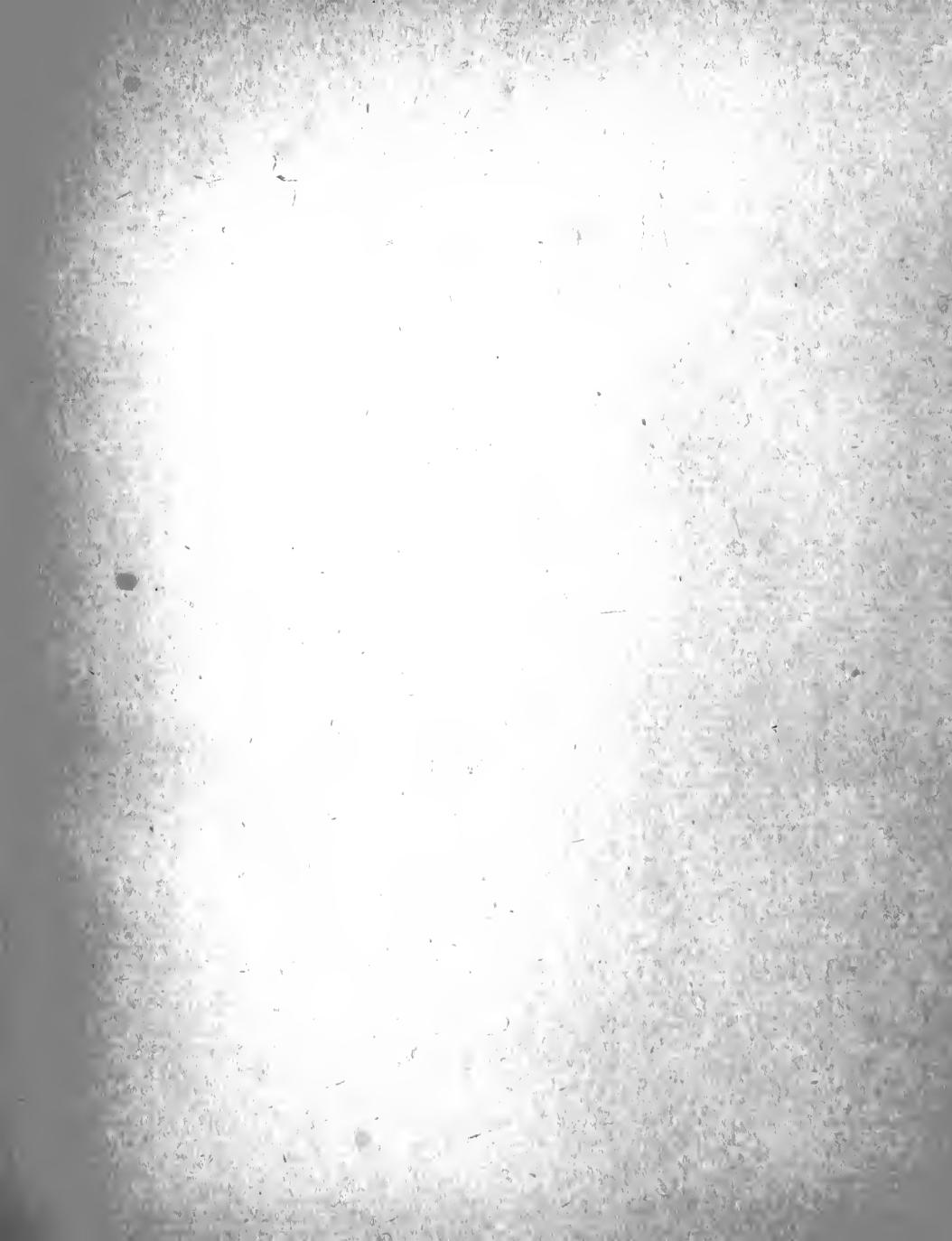
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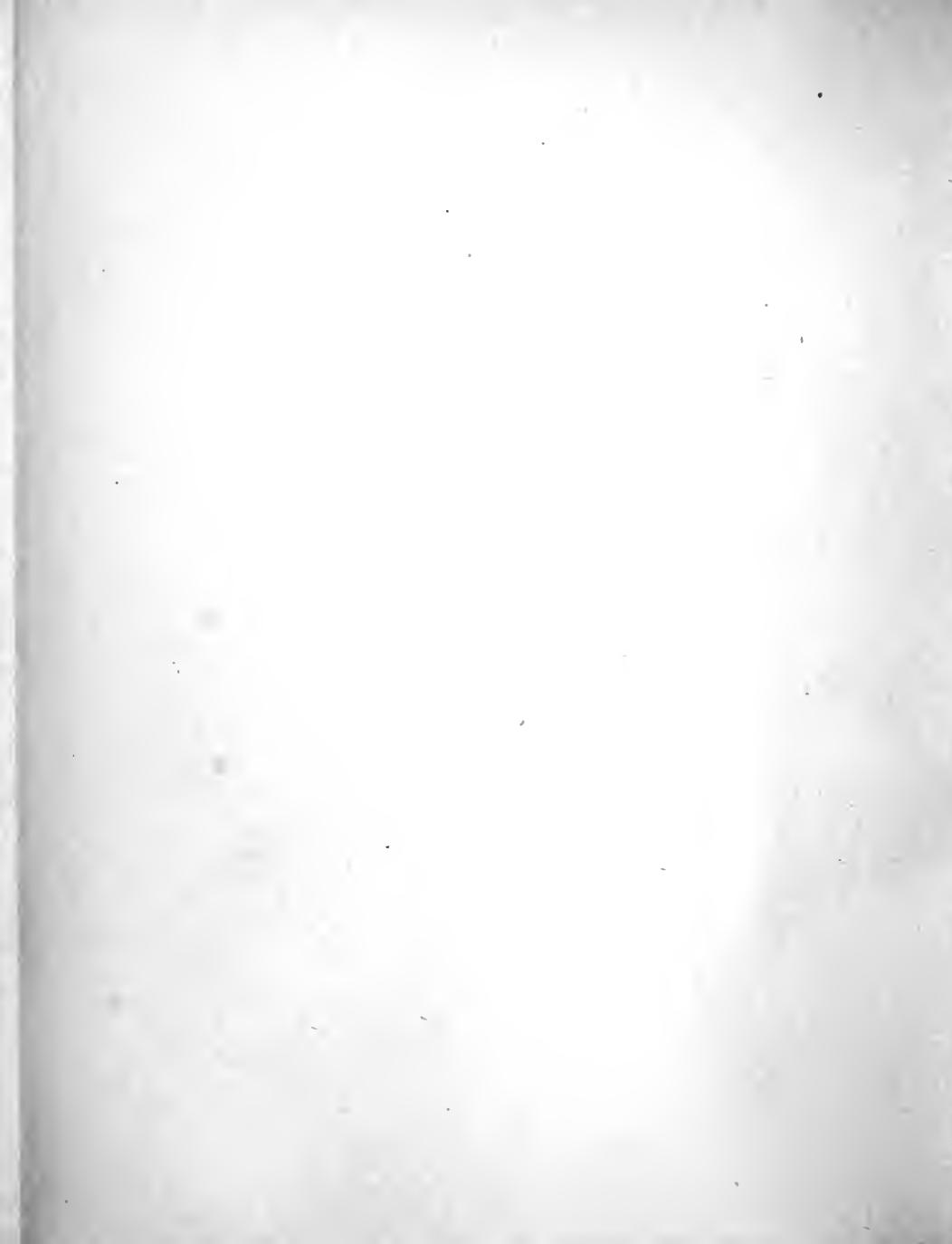


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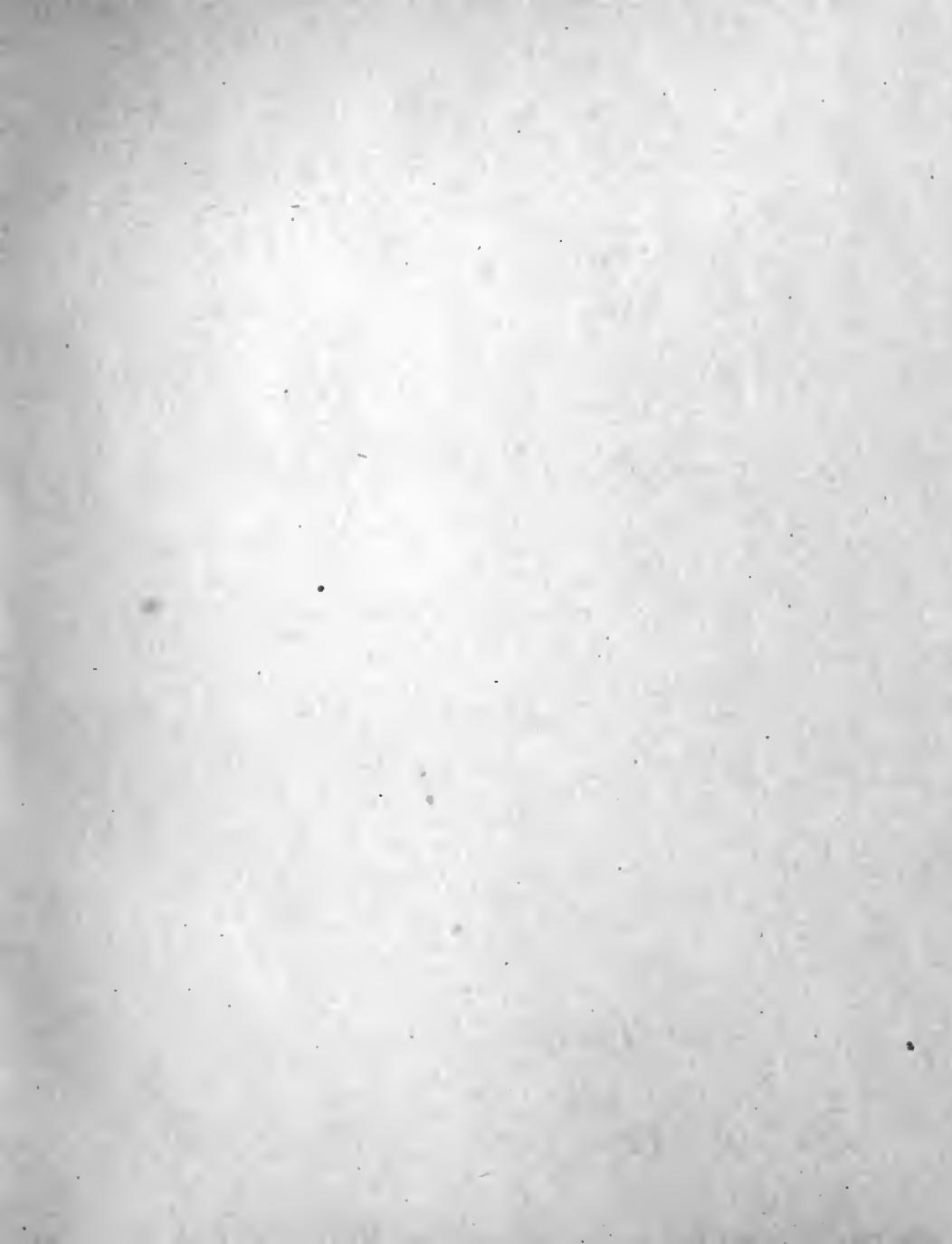


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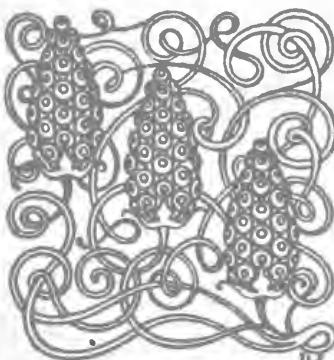
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POEMS
BY FRANCIS
THOMPSON



LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS & JOHN LANE
BOSTON
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1894

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DEDICATION.

TO WILFRID AND ALICE MEYNELL.

If the rose in meek duty
 May dedicate humbly
To her grower the beauty
 Wherewith she is comely,
If the mine to the miner
 The jewels that pined in it,
Earth to diviner
 The springs he divined in it,
To the grapes the wine-pitcher
 Their juice that was crushed in it,
Viol to its witcher
 The music lay hushed in it,
If the lips may pay Gladness
 In laughters she wakened,
And the heart to its sadness
 Weeping unslakened,
If the hid and sealed coffer,
 Whose having not his is,

To the losers may proffer
Their finding—here this is;
Their lives if all livers
To the Life of all living,
To you, O dear givers !
I give your own giving.

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Love in Dian's Lap.

I.

BEFORE HER PORTRAIT IN YOUTH.

As lovers, banished from their lady's face,
 And hopeless of her grace,
Fashion a ghostly sweetness in its place,
 Fondly adore
Some stealth-won cast attire she wore,
 A kerchief, or a glove :
 And at the lover's beck
Into the glove there fleets the hand,
 Or at impetuous command
Up from the kerchief floats the virgin neck :
So I, in very lowlihead of love,—
 Too shyly reverencing
 To let one thought's light footfall smooth
Tread near the living, consecrated thing,—
 Treasure me thy cast youth.
This outworn vesture, tenantless of thee,
 Hath yet my knee,
For that, with show and semblance fair
 Of the past Her
Who once the beautiful, discarded raiment bare,
 It cheateth me.
As gale to gale drifts breath
 Of blossoms' death,

So dropping down the years from hour to hour
 This dead youth's scent is wafted me to-day:
 I sit, and from the fragrance dream the flower.
 So, then, she looked (I say);
 And so her front sunk down
 Heavy beneath the poet's iron crown:
 On her mouth museful-sweet
 (Even as the twin lips meet)
 Did thought and sadness greet:
 Sighs
 In those mournful eyes
 So put on visibilities;
 As viewless ether torns, in deep on deep, to dyes.
 Thus, long ago,
 She kept her meditative paces slow
 Through maiden meads, with wavèd shadow and gleam
 Of locks half-lifted on the winds of dream,
 Till love upcaught her to his chariot's glow.
 Yet, voluntary, happier Proserpine!
 This drooping flower of youth thou lettest fall
 I, faring in the cockshut-light, astray,
 Find on my 'lated way,
 And stoop, and gather for memorial,
 And lay it on my bosom, and make it mine.
 To this, the all of love the stars allow me,
 I dedicate and vow me.
 I reach back through the days
 A trothed hand to the dead the last trump shall not raise.
 The water-wraith that cries
 From those eternal sorrows of thy pictured eyes
 Entwines and draws me down their soundless intricacies!

II.

TO A POET BREAKING SILENCE.

Too wearily had we and song
Been left to look and left to long,
Yea, song and we to long and look,
Since thine acquainted feet forsook
The mountain where the Muses hymn
For Sinai and the Seraphim.
Now in both the mountains' shine
Dress thy countenance, twice divine !
From Moses and the Muses draw
The Tables of thy double Law !
His rod-born fount and Castaly
Let the one rock bring forth for thee,
Renewing so from either spring
The songs which both thy countries sing :
Or we shall fear lest, heavened thus long,
Thou should'st forget thy native song,
And mar thy mortal melodies
With broken stammer of the skies.

Ah ! let the sweet birds of the Lord
With earth's waters make accord ;

Teach how the crucifix may be
 Carven from the laurel-tree,
 Fruit of the Hesperides
 Burnish take on Eden-trees,
 The Muses' sacred grove be wet
 With the red dew of Olivet,
 And Sappho lay her burning brows
 In white Cecilia's lap of snows !

Thy childhood must have felt the stings
 Of too divine o'ershadowings ;
 Its odorous heart have been a blossom
 That in darkness did umbosom,
 Those fire-flies of God to invite,
 Burning spirits, which by night
 Bear upon their laden wing
 To such hearts impregnating.
 For flowers that night-wings fertilize
 Mock down the stars' unsteady eyes,
 And with a happy, sleepless glance
 Gaze the moon out of countenance.
 I think thy girlhood's watchers must
 Have took thy folded songs on trust,
 And felt them, as one feels the stir
 Of still lightnings in the hair,
 When conscious hush expects the cloud
 To speak the golden secret loud
 Which tacit air is privy to ;
 Flasked in the grape the wine they knew,
 Ere thy poet-mouth was able

For its first young starry babble.
Keep'st thou not yet that subtle grace ?
Yea, in this silent interspace,
God sets His poems in thy face !

The loom which mortal verse affords,
Out of weak and mortal words,
Wovest thou thy singing-weed in,
To a rune of thy far Eden.
Vain are all disguises ! Ah,
Heavenly incognita !
Thy mien bewrayeth through that wrong
The great Uranian House of Song !
As the vintages of earth
Taste of the sun that riped their birth,
We know what never cadent Sun
Thy lampèd clusters throbbed upon,
What plumed feet the winepress trod ;
Thy wine is flavorous of God.
Whatever singing-robe thou wear
Has the Paradisal air ;
And some gold feather it has kept
Shows what Floor it lately swept !

III.

“MANUS ANIMAM PINXIT.”

LADY who hold'st on me dominion !
Within your spirit's arms I stay me fast
 Against the fell
Immitigate ravening of the gates of hell ;
And claim my right in you, most hardly won,
Of chaste fidelity upon the chaste :
Hold me and hold by me, lest both should fall
(O in high escalade high companion !)
Even in the breach of Heaven's assaulted wall.
Like to a wind-sown sapling grow I from
The clift, Sweet, of your skyward-jetting soul,—
Shook by all gusts that sweep it, overcome
By all its clouds incumbent : O be true
To your soul, dearest, as my life to you !
For if that soil grow sterile, then the whole
Of me must shrivel, from the topmost shoot
Of climbing poesy, and my life, killed through,
Dry down and perish to the foodless root.

Sweet Summer ! unto you this swallow drew,
By secret instincts inappeasable,
 That did direct him well,

Lured from his gelid North which wrought him wrong,
 Wintered of sunning song ;—
 By happy instincts inappeasable,
 Ah, yes ! that led him well,
 Lured to the untried regions and the new
 Climes of auspicious you ;
 To twitter there, and in his singing dwell,
 But ah ! if you, my Summer, should grow waste,
 With grieving skies o'ercast,
 For such migration my poor wing was strong
 But once ; it has no power to fare again
 Forth o'er the heads of men,
 Nor other Summers for its sanctuary :
 But from your mind's chilled sky
 It needs must drop, and lie with stiffened wings
 Among your soul's forlornest things ;
 A speck upon your memory, alack !
 A dead fly in a dusty window-crack.

O therefore you who are
 What words, being to such mysteries
 As raiment to the body is,
 Should rather hide than tell ;
 Chaste and intelligential love :
 Whose form is as a grove
 Hushed with the cooing of an unseen dove ;
 Whose spirit to my touch thrills purer far
 Than is the tingling of a silver bell ;
 Whose body other ladies well might bear
 As soul,—yea, which it profanation were

For all but you to take as fleshly woof,
 Being spirit truest proof;
Whose spirit sure is lineal to that
 Which sang *Magnificat* :
 Chastest, since such you are,
 Take this curbed spirit of mine,
Which your own eyes invest with light divine,
For lofty love and high auxiliar
 In daily exalt emprise
 Which outsoars mortal eyes ;
This soul which on your soul is laid,
 As maid's breast against breast of maid ;
Beholding how your own I have engraved
On it, and with what purging thoughts have laved
This love of mine from all mortality.
Indeed the copy is a painful one,
 And with long labour done !
O if you doubt the thing you are, lady,
 Come then, and look in me ;
Your beauty, Dian, dress and contemplate
Within a pool to Dian consecrate !
Unveil this spirit, lady, when you will,
For unto all but you 'tis veildè still :
Unveil, and fearless gaze there, you alone,
And if you love the image—'tis your own !

IV.

A CARRIER-SONG.

I.

SINCE you have waned from us,
 Fairest of women !
I am a darkened cage
 Song cannot hymn in.
My songs have followed you,
 Like birds the summer ;
Ah ! bring them back to me,
 Swiftly, dear comer !
Serafhim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

II.

Where wings to rustle use,
 But this poor tarrier—
Searching my spirit's eaves—
 Find I for carrier.

Ah ! bring them back to me
 Swiftly, sweet comer !
 Swift, swift, and bring with you
 Song's Indian summer !

Seraphim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

III.

Whereso your angel is,
 My angel goeth ;
 I am left guardianless,
 Paradise knoweth !
 I have no Heaven left
 To weep my wrongs to ;
 Heaven, when you went from us,
 Went with my songs too.

Seraphim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

IV.

I have no angels left
 Now, Sweet, to pray to :

Where you have made your shrine
 They are away to.
 They have struck Heaven's tent,
 And gone to cover you :
 Whereso you keep your state
 Heaven is pitched over you !

Seraphim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

v.

She that is Heaven's Queen
 Her title borrows,
 For that she pitiful
 Beareth our sorrows.
 So thou, *Regina mi,*
Spes infirmorum ;
 With all our grieving crowned
Mater dolorum !

Seraphim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

vi.

Yet, envious coveter
 Of other's grieving !

This lonely longing yet
 'Scapeth your reaving.
 Cruel ! to take from a
 Sinner his Heaven !
 Think you with contrite smiles
 To be forgiven ?

Seraphim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

VII.

Penitent ! give me back
 Angels, and Heaven ;
 Render your stolen self,
 And be forgiven !
 How frontier Heaven from you ?
 For my soul prays, Sweet,
 Still to your face in Heaven,
 Heaven in your face, Sweet !

Seraphim,
Her to hymn,
Might leave their portals ;
And at my feet learn
The harping of mortals !

V.

SCALA JACOBI PORTAQUE EBURNEA.

HER soul from earth to Heaven lies,
Like the ladder of the vision,
Whereon go
To and fro,
In ascension and demission,
Star-flecked feet of Paradise.

Now she is drawn up from me
All my angels, wet-eyed, tristful,
Gaze from great
Heaven's gate
Like pent children, very wistful,
That below a playmate see.

Dream-dispensing face of hers !
Ivory port which loosed upon me
Wings, I wist,
Whose amethyst
Trepidations have forgone me,—
Hesper's filmy traffickers !

VI.

GILDED GOLD.

THOU dost to rich attire a grace,
To let it deck itself with thee,
And teachest pomp strange cunning ways
To be thought simplicity.
But lilies, stolen from grassy mold,
No more curlèd state unfold
Translated to a vase of gold;
In burning throne though they keep still
Serenities unthawed and chill.
Therefore, albeit thou'rt stately so,
In statelier state thou us'dst to go.

Though jewels should phosphoric burn
Through those night-waters of thine hair,
A flower from its translucid urn
Poured silver flame more lunar-fair.
These futile trappings but recall
Degenerate worshippers who fall
In purfled kirtle and brocade
To 'parel the white Mother-Maid.
For, as her image stood arrayed
In vests of its self-substance wrought

To measure of the sculptor's thought—
 Slurred by those added braveries ;—
 So for thy spirit did devise
 Its Maker seemly garniture,
 Of its own essence parcel pure,—
 From grave simplicities a dress,
 And reticent demureness,
 And love encinctured with reserve ;
 Which the woven vesture would subserve.
 For outward robes in their ostents
 Should show the soul's habiliments.
 Therefore I say,—Thou'rt fair even so,
 But better Fair I use to know.

The violet would thy dusk hair deck
 With graces like thine own unsought.
 Ah ! but such place would daze and wreck
 Its simple, lowly rustic thought.
 For so advancèd, dear, to thee,
 It would unlearn humility !
 Yet do not, with an altered look,
 In these weak numbers read rebuke ;
 Which are but jealous lest too much
 God's master-piece thou shouldst retouch.
 Where a sweetness is complete,
 Add not sweets unto the sweet !
 Or, as thou wilt, for others so
 In unfamiliar richness go ;
 But keep for mine acquainted eyes
 The fashions of thy Paradise.

VII.

HER PORTRAIT.

OH, but the heavenly grammar did I hold
Of that high speech which angels' tongues turn gold !
So should her deathless beauty take no wrong,
Praised in her own great kindred's fit and cognate tongue.
Or if that language yet with us abode
Which Adam in the garden talked with God !
But our untempered speech descends—poor heirs !
Grimy and rough-cast still from Babel's bricklayers :
Curse on the brutish jargon we inherit,
Strong but to damn, not memorise, a spirit !
A cheek, a lip, a limb, a bosom, they
Move with light ease in speech of working-day ;
And women we do use to praise even so.
But here the gates we burst, and to the temple go.
Their praise were her dispraise ; who dare, who dare,
Adulate the seraphim for their burning hair ?
How, if with them I dared, here should I dare it ?
How praise the woman, who but know the spirit ?
How praise the colour of her eyes, uncaught
While they were coloured with her varying thought ?

How her mouth's shape, who only use to know
 What tender shape her speech will fit it to ?
 Or her lips' redness, when their joined veil
 Song's fervid hand has parted till it wore them pale ?

If I would praise her soul (temerarious if !),
 All must be mystery and hieroglyph.
 Heaven, which not oft is prodigal of its more
 To singers, in their song too great before ;
 By which the hierarch of large poesy is
 Restrained to his one sacred benefice ;
 Only for her the salutary awe
 Relaxes and stern canon of its law ;
 To her alone concedes pluralities,
 In her alone to reconcile agrees
 The Muses, the Graces, and the Charities ;
 To her, who can the trust so well conduct,
 To her it gives the use, to us the usufruct.

What of the dear administress then may
 I utter, though I spoke her own carved perfect way ?
 What of her daily gracious converse known,
 Whose heavenly despotism must needs dethrone
 And subjugate all sweetness but its own ?
 Deep in my heart subsides the infrequent word,
 And there dies slowly throbbing like a wounded bird.
 What of her silence, that outsweetens speech ?
 What of her thoughts, high marks for mine own
 thoughts to reach ?
 Yet (Chaucer's antique sentence so to turn),

Most gladly will she teach, and gladly learn ;
 And teaching her, by her enchanting art,
 The master threefold learns for all he can impart.
 Now all is said, and all being said,—aye me !
 There yet remains unsaid the very She.
 Nay, to conclude (so to conclude I dare),
 If of her virtues you evade the snare,
 Then for her faults you'll fall in love with her.

Alas, and I have spoken of her Muse—
 Her Muse, that died with her auroral dews !
 Learn, the wise cherubim from harps of gold
 Seduce a trepidating music manifold !
 But the superior seraphim do know
 Nône other music but to flame and glow.
 So she first lighted on our frosty earth,
 A sad musician, of cherubic birth,
 Playing to alien ears—which did not prize
 The uncomprehended music of the skies—
 The exiled airs of her far Paradise.
 But soon from her own harpings taking fire,
 In love and light her melodies expire.
 Now Heaven affords her, for her silenced hymn,
 A double portion of the seraphim.

At the rich odours from her heart that rise,
 My soul remembers its lost Paradise,
 And antenatal gales blow from Heaven's shores of spice ;
 I grow essential all, uncloaking me
 From this encumbering virility,

And feel the primal sex of heaven and poetry :
 And parting from her, in me linger on
 Vague snatches of Uranian antiphon.

How to the petty prison could she shrink
 Of femineity ?—Nay, but I think
 In a dear courtesy her spirit would
 Woman assume, for grace to womanhood.
 Or, votaress to the virgin Sanctitude
 Of reticent withdrawals sweet, courted pale,
 She took the cloistral flesh, the sexual veil,
 Of her sad, aboriginal sisterhood ;
 The habit of cloistral flesh which founding Eve indued.

Thus do I know her : but for what men call
 Beauty—the loveliness corporeal,
 Its most just praise a thing unproper were
 To singer or to listener, me or her.
 She wears that body but as one indues
 A robe, half careless, for it is the use ;
 Although her soul and it so fair agree,
 We sure may, unattaint of heresy,
 Conceit it might the soul's begetter be.
 The immortal could we cease to contemplate,
 The mortal part suggests its every trait.
 God laid His fingers on the ivories
 Of her pure members as on smoothèd keys,
 And there out-breathed her spirit's harmonies.
 I'll speak a little proudly :—I disdain
 To count the beauty worth my wish or gain,

Which the dull daily fool can covet or obtain.
 I do confess the fairness of the spoil,
 But from such rivalry it takes a soil.
 For her I'll prouder speak :—how could it be
 That I should praise the gilding of the psaltery ?
 'Tis not for her to hold that prize a prize,
 Or praise much praise, though proudest in its wise,
 To which even hopes of merely women rise.
 Such strife would to the vanquished laurels yield.
 Against *her* suffered to have lost a field.
 Herself must with herself be sole compeer,
 Unless the people of her distant sphere
 Some gold migration send to melodise the year.
 But first our hearts must burn in larger guise,
 To reformat the uncharitable skies,
 And so the deathless plumage to acclimatise :
 Since this, their sole congener in our clime,
 Droops her sad, ruffled thoughts for half the shivering time.

Yet I have felt what terrors may consort
 In women's cheeks, the Graces' soft resort ;
 My hand hath shook at gentle hands' access,
 And trembled at the waving of a tress ;
 My blood known panic fear, and fled dismayed,
 Where ladies' eyes have set their ambuscade.
 The rustle of a robe hath been to me
 The very rattle of love's musketry ;
 Although my heart hath beat the loud advance,
 I have recoiled before a challenging glance,
 Proved gay alarms where warlike ribbons dance.

And from it all, this knowledge have I got,—
 The whole that others have, is less than they have not ;
 All which makes other women noted fair,
 Unnoted would remain and overshone in her.

How should I gauge what beauty is her dole,
 Who cannot see her countenance for her soul ;
 As birds see not the casement for the sky ?
 And as 'tis check they prove its presence by,
 I know not of her body till I find
 My flight debarred the heaven of her mind.
 Hers is the face whence all should copied be,
 Did God make replicas of such as she ;
 Its presence felt by what it does abate,
 Because the soul shines through tempered and mitigate :
 Where—as a figure labouring at night
 Beside the body of a splendid light—
 Dark Time works hidden by its luminousness ;
 And every line he labours to impress
 Turns added beauty, like the veins that run
 Athwart a leaf which hangs against the sun.

There regent Melancholy wide controls ;
 There Earth- and Heaven-Love play for aureoles ;
 There Sweetness out of Sadness breaks at fits,
 Like bubbles on dark water, or as flits
 A sudden silver fin through its deep infinites ;
 There amorous Thought has sucked pale Fancy's breath,
 And Tenderness sits looking toward the lands of death ;
 There Feeling stills her breathing with her hand,

And Dream from Melancholy part wrests the wand ;
 And on this lady's heart, looked you so deep,
 Poor Poetry has rocked himself to sleep :
 Upon the heavy blossom of her lips
 Hangs the bee Musing ; nigh her lids eclipse
 Each half-occulted star beneath that lies ;
 And in the contemplation of those eyes,
 Passionless passion, wild tranquillities.

EPILOGUE.

TO THE POET'S SITTER,

Wherein he excuseth himself for the manner of the Portrait.

ALAS ! now wilt thou chide, and say (I deem),
 My figured descant hides the simple theme :
 Or in another wise reproving, say
 I ill observe thine own high reticent way.
 Oh, pardon, that I testify of thee
 What thou couldst never speak, nor others be !

Yet (for the book is not more innocent
 Of what the gazer's eyes makes so intent),
 She will but smile, perhaps, that I find my fair
 Sufficing scope in such strait theme as her.
 " Bird of the sun ! the stars' wild honey-bee !

Is your gold browsing done so thoroughly ?
 Or sinks a singèd wing to narrow nest in me ? "
 (Thus she might say : for not this lowly vein
 Out deprecates her deprecating strain).
 Oh, you mistake, dear lady, quite ; nor know
 Ether was strict as you, its loftiness as low !

The heavens do not advance their majesty
 Over their marge ; beyond his empery
 The ensigns of the wind are not unfurled,
 His reign is hooped in by the pale o' the world.
 'Tis not the continent, but the contained,
 That pleasaunce makes or prison, loose or chained.
 Too much alike or little captives me,
 For all oppression is captivity.
 What groweth to its height demands no higher ;
 The limit limits not, but the desire.
 Give but my spirit its desirèd scope,—
 A giant in a pismire, I not grope ;
 Deny it,—and an ant, with on my back
 A firmament, the skiey vault will crack.
 Our minds make their own termini, nor call
 The issuing circumscriptions great or small ;
 So high constructing Nature lessens to us all ;
 Who optics gives accommodate to see
 Your countenance large as looks the sun to be,
 And distant greatness less than near humanity.

We, therefore, with a sure instinctive mind,
 An equal spaciousness of bondage find

In confines far or near, of air or our own kind.
Our looks and longings, which affront the stars,
Most richly bruised against their golden bars,
Delighted captives of their flaming spears,
Find a restraint restraintless which appears
As that is, and so simply natural,
In you ;—the fair detention freedom call,
And overscroll with fancies the loved prison-wall.

Such sweet captivity, and only such,
In you, as in those golden bars, we touch !
Our gazes for sufficing limits know
The firmament above, your face below ;
Our longings are contented with the skies,
Contented with the heaven, and your eyes.
My restless wings, that beat the whole world through,
Flag on the confines of the sun and you ;
And find the human pale remoter of the two.

Miscellaneous Poems.



TO THE DEAD CARDINAL OF WESTMINSTER.

I WILL not perturbate
Thy Paradisal state
With praise
Of thy dead days ;

To the new-heavened say,—
“Spirit, thou wert fine clay :”
This do,
Thy praise who knew.

Therefore my spirit clings
Heaven’s porter by the wings,
And holds
Its gated golds

Apart, with thee to press
A private business ;—
Whence,
Deign me audience.

Anchorite, who didst dwell
With all the world for cell !
My soul
Round me doth roll

A sequestration bare.
 Too far alike we were,
 Too far
 Dissimilar.

For its burning fruitage I
 Do climb the tree o' the sky;
 Do prize
 Some human eyes.

You smelt the Heaven-blossoms,
 And all the sweets embosoms
 The dear
 Uranian year.

Those Eyes my weak gaze shuns,
 Which to the suns are Suns,
 Did
 Not affray your lid.

The carpet was let down
 (With golden mouldings strown)
 For you
 Of the angels' blue.

But I, ex-Paradised,
 The shoulder of your Christ
 Find high
 To lean thereby.

So flaps my helpless sail,
 Bellying with neither gale,
 Of Heaven
 Nor Orcus even.

Life is a coquetry
 Of Death, which wearies me,
 Too sure
 Of the amour ;

A tiring-room where I
 Death's divers garments try,
 Till fit
 Some fashion sit.

It seemeth me too much
 I do rehearse for such
 A mean
 And single scene.

The sandy glass hence bear—
 Antique remembrancer ;
 My veins
 Do spare its pains.

With secret sympathy
 My thoughts repeat in me
 Infirm
 The turn o' the worm

Beneath my appointed sod ;
 The grave is in my blood ;
 I shake
 To winds that take

Its grasses by the top ;
 The rains thereon that drop
 Perturb
 With drip acerb

My subtly answering soul ;
 The feet across its knoll
 Do jar
 Me from afar.

As sap foretastes the spring ;
 As Earth ere blossoming
 Thrills
 With far daffodils,

And feels her breast turn sweet
 With the unconceivèd wheat ;
 So doth
 My flesh foreloathe

The abhorred spring of Dis,
 With seething prescience
 Affirm
 The preparate worm.

I have no thought that I,
 When at the last I die,
 Shall reach
 To gain your speech.

But you, should that be so,
 May very well, I know,
 May well
 To me in hell

With recognising eyes
 Look from your Paradise—
 “God bless
 Thy hopelessness ! ”

Call, holy soul, O call
 The hosts angelical,
 And say,—
 “ See, far away

“ Lies one I saw on earth ;
 One stricken from his birth
 With curse
 Of destinate verse.

“ What place doth He ye serve
 For such sad spirit reserve,—
 Given,
 In dark lieu of Heaven,

“ The impitiable Dæmon,
 Beauty, to adore and dream on,
 To be
 Perpetually

“ Hers, but she never his ?
 He reapeth miseries,
 Foreknows
 His wages woes ;

“ He lives detachèd days ;
 He serveth not for praise ;
 For gold
 He is not sold ;

“ Deaf is he to world’s tongue ;
 He scorneth for his song
 The loud
 Shouts of the crowd ;

“ He asketh not world’s eyes ;
 Not to world’s ears he cries ;
 Saith, — ‘ These
 Shut, if ye please ; ’

“ He measureth world’s pleasure,
 World’s ease as Saints might measure ;
 For hire
 Just love entire

“ He asks, not grudging pain ;
 And knows his asking vain,
 And cries—
 ‘ Love ! Love ! ’ and dies ;

“ In guerdon of long duty,
 Unowned by Love or Beauty ;
 And goes—
 Tell, tell, who knows !

“ Aliens from Heaven’s worth,
 Fine beasts who nose i’ the earth,
 Do there
 Reward prepare.

“ But are *his* great desires
 Food but for nether fires ?
 Ah me,
 A mystery !

“ Can it be his alone,
 To find when all is known,
 That what
 He solely sought

“ Is lost, and thereto lost
 All that its seeking cost ?
 That he
 Must finally,

“ Through sacrificial tears,
And anchoritic years,
Tryst
With the sensualist ? ”

So ask ; and if they tell
The secret terrible,
Good friend,
I pray thee send

Some high gold embassage
To teach my unripe age.
Tell !
Lest my feet walk hell.

A FALLEN YEW.

It seemed corrival of the world's great prime,
Made to un-edge the scythe of Time,
And last with stateliest rhyme.

No tender Dryad ever did indue
That rigid chiton of rough yew,
To fret her white flesh through:

But some god like to those grim Asgard lords,
Who walk the fables of the hordes
From Scandinavian fjords,

Upheaved its stubborn girth, and raised unriven,
Against the whirl-blast and the levin,
Defiant arms to Heaven.

When doom puffed out the stars, we might have said,
It would decline its heavy head,
And see the world to bed.

For this firm yew did from the vassal leas,
And rain and air, its tributaries,
Its revenues increase,

And levy impost on the golden sun,
 Take the blind years as they might run,
 And no fate seek or shun.

But now our yew is strook, is fallen—yea
 Hacked like dull wood of every day
 To this and that, men say.

Never!—To Hades' shadowy shipyards gone,
 Dim barge of Dis, down Acheron
 It drops, or Lethe wan.

Stirred by its fall—poor destined bark of Dis!—
 Along my soul a bruit there is
 Of echoing images,

Reverberations of mortality :
 Spelt backward from its death, to me
 Its life reads saddenedly.

Its breast was hollowed as the tooth of eld ;
 And boys, there creeping unbeheld,
 A laughing moment dwelled.

Yet they, within its very heart so crept,
 Reached not the heart that courage kept
 With winds and years beswept.

And in its boughs did close and kindly nest
 The birds, as they within its breast,
 By all its leaves caressed.

But bird nor child might touch by any art
 Each other's or the tree's hid heart,
 A whole God's breadth apart;

The breadth of God, the breadth of death and life !
 Even so, even so, in undreamed strife
 With pulseless Law, the wife,—

The sweetest wife on sweetest marriage-day,—
 Their souls at grapple in mid-way,
 Sweet to her sweet may say :

“ I take you to my inmost heart, my true ! ”
 Ah, fool ! but there is one heart you
 Shall never take him to !

The hold that falls not when the town is got,
 The heart's heart, whose immur'd plot
 Hath keys yourself keep not !

Its ports you cannot burst—you are withheld—
 For him that to your listening blood
 Sends precepts as he would.

Its gates are deaf to Love, high summoner ;
 Yea, Love's great warrant runs not there :
 You are your prisoner.

Yourself are with yourself the sole consortress
 In that unleaguerable fortress ;
 It knows you not for portress.

Its keys are at the cincture hung of God ;
Its gates are trepidant to His nod ;
By Him its floors are trod.

And if His feet shall rock those floors in wrath,
Or blest aspersion sleek His path,
Is only choice it hath.

Yea, in that ultimate heart's occult abode
To lie as in an oubliette of God,
Or as a bower untrod,

Built by a secret Lover for His Spouse ;—
Sole choice is this your life allows,
Sad tree, whose perishing boughs
So few birds house !

DREAM-TRYST.

THE breaths of kissing night and day
Were mingled in the eastern Heaven :
Throbbing with unheard melody
Shook Lyra all its star-chord seven :
When dusk shrunk cold, and light trod shy,
And dawn's grey eyes were troubled grey ;
And souls went palely up the sky,
And mine to Lucidé.

There was no change in her sweet eyes
Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine ;
There was no change in her deep heart
Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.
Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,
Wherein did ever come and go
The sparkle of the fountain-drops
From her sweet soul below.

The chambers in the house of dreams
Are fed with so divine an air,
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,
And they who walk there are most fair.
I joyed for me, I joyed for her,
Who with the Past meet girt about :
Where our last kiss still warms the air,
Nor can her eyes go out.

A CORYMBUS FOR AUTUMN.

HEARKEN my chant, 'tis
As a Bacchante's,
A grape-spurt, a vine-splash, a tossed tress, flown
vaunt 'tis!
Suffer my singing,
Gipsy of Seasons, ere thou go winging ;
Ere Winter throws
His slaking snows
In thy feasting-flagon's impurpurate glows !
The sopped sun—toper as ever drank hard—
Stares foolish, hazed,
Rubicund, dazed,
Totty with thine October tankard.
Tanned maiden ! with cheeks like apples russet,
And breast a brown agaric faint-flushing at tip,
And a mouth too red for the moon to buss it,
But her cheek unvow its vestalship ;
Thy mists enclip
Her steel-clear circuit illuminous,
Until it crust
Rubiginous
With the glorious gules of a glowing rust.

Far other saw we, other indeed,
 The crescent moon, in the May-days dead,
 Fly up with its slender white wings spread
 Out of its nest in the sea's waved mead !
 How are the veins of thee, Autumn, laden ?
 Umbered juices,
 And pulpèd oozes
 Pappy out of the cherry-bruises,
 Froth the veins of thee, wild, wild maiden !
 With hair that musters
 In globèd clusters,
 In tumbling clusters, like swarthy grapes,
 Round thy brow and thine ears o'ershaden ;
 With the burning darkness of eyes like pansies,
 Like velvet pansies
 Wherethrough escapes
 The splendid might of thy conflagrate fancies ;
 With robe gold-tawny not hiding the shapes
 Of the feet whereunto it falleth down,
 Thy naked feet unsandallèd ;
 With robe gold-tawny that does not veil
 Feet where the red
 Is meshed in the brown,
 Like a rubied sun in a Venice-sail.

 The wassailous heart of the Year is thine !
 His Bacchic fingers disentwine
 His coronal
 At thy festival ;
 His revelling fingers disentwine

Leaf, flower, and all,
 And let them fall
 Blossom and all in thy wavering wine.
 The Summer looks out from her brazen tower,
 Through the flashing bars of July,
 Waiting thy ripened golden shower ;
 Whereof there cometh, with sandals fleet,
 The North-west flying viewlessly,
 With a sword to sheer, and untameable feet,
 And the gorgon-head of the Winter shown
 To stiffen the gazing earth as stone.

In crystal Heaven's magic sphere
 Poised in the palm of thy fervid hand,
 Thou seest the enchanted shows appear
 That stain Favonian firmament ;
 Richer than ever the Occident
 Gave up to bygone Summer's wand.
 Day's dying dragon lies drooping his crest,
 Panting red pants into the West.
 Or a butterfly sunset clasps its wings
 With flutter alit on the swinging blossom,
 The gusty blossom, that tosses and swings,
 Of the sea with its blown and ruffled bosom ;
 Its ruffled bosom wherethrough the wind sings
 Till the crispèd petals are loosened and strown
 Overblown, on the sand ;
 Shed, curling as dead
 Rose-leaves curl, on the fleckèd strand.

Or higher, holier, saintlier when, as now,
All nature sacerdotal seems, and thou.

The calm hour strikes on yon golden gong,

In tones of floating and mellow light

A spreading summons to even-song :

See how there

The cowlèd night

Kneels on the Eastern sanctuary-stair.

What is this feel of incense everywhere ?

Clings it round folds of the blanch-amiced clouds,
Upwafted by the solemn thurifer,

The mighty spirit unknown,

That swingeth the slow earth before the embannered
Throne ?

Or is't the Season under all these shrouds
Of light, and sense, and silence, makes her known

A presence everywhere,

An inarticulate prayer,

A hand on the soothed tresses of the air ?

But there is one hour scant

Of this Titanian, primal liturgy ;

As there is but one hour for me and thee,

Autumn, for thee and thine hierophant,

Of this grave ending chant.

Round the earth still and stark

Heaven's death-lights kindle, yellow spark by spark,
Beneath the dreadful catafalque of the dark.

And I had ended there :
But a great wind blew all the stars to flare,

And cried, "I sweep the path before the moon !
 Tarry ye now the coming of the moon,
 For she is coming soon ;"
 Then died before the coming of the moon.
 And she came forth upon the trepidant air,
 In vesture unimagined-fair,
 Woven as woof of flag-lilies ;
 And curdled as of flag-lilies
 The vapour at the feet of her,
 And a haze about her tinged in fainter wise.
 As if she had trodden the stars in press,
 Till the gold wine spurted over her dress,
 Till the gold wine gushed out round her feet ;
 Spouted over her stainèd wear,
 And bubbled in golden froth at her feet,
 And hung like a whirlpool's mist round her.
 Still, mighty Season, do I see't,
 Thy sway is still majestical !
 Thou hold'st of God, by title sure,
 Thine indefeasible investiture,
 And that right round thy locks are native to ;
 The heavens upon thy brow imperial,
 This huge terrene thy ball,
 And o'er thy shoulders thrown wide air's depending pall.
 What if thine earth be blear and bleak of hue ?
 Still, still the skies are sweet !
 Still, Season, still thou hast thy triumphs there !
 How have I, unaware,
 Forgetful of my strain inaugural,
 Cleft the great rondure of thy reign complete,

Yielding thee half, who hast indeed the all ?

I will not think thy sovereignty begun

But with the shepherd sun

That washes in the sea the stars' gold fleeces,

Or that with day it ceases,

Who sets his burning lips to the salt brine,

And purples it to wine ;

While I behold how ermined Artemis

Ordainèd weed must wear,

And toil thy business ;

Who witness am of her,

Her too in autumn turned a vintager ;

And, laden with its lampèd clusters bright,

The fiery-fruited vineyard of this night.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN.

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days ;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years ;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind ; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped ;
 And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat—and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet—
“ All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
 Trellised with intertwining charities ;
(For, though I knew His love Who followéd,

Yet was I sore adread
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside)
 But, if one little casement parted wide,
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
 Across the margent of the world I fled,
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
 Smiting for shelter on their changèd bars ;
 Fretted to dulcet jars
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
 I said to dawn : Be sudden—to eve : Be soon ;
 With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
 From this tremendous Lover !
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see !
 I tempted all His servitors, but to find
 My own betrayal in their constancy,
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue ;
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
 The long savannahs of the blue ;
 Or whether, Thunder-driven,
 They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their
 feet :—
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
 Still with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancey,

Came on the following Feet,
 And a Voice above their beat—
 “Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.”

I sought no more that, after which I strayed,
 In face of man or maid ;
 But still within the little children’s eyes
 Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me !
 I turned me to them very wistfully ;
 But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
 With dawning answers there,
 Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
 “Come then, ye other children, Nature’s—share
 With me” (said I) “your delicate fellowship ;
 Let me greet you lip to lip,
 Let me twine with you caresses,
 Wantoning
 With our Lady-Mother’s vagrant tresses,
 Banqueting
 With her in her wind-walled palace,
 Underneath her azured daïs,
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
 From a chalice
 Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.”
 So it was done :
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
 Drew the bolt of Nature’s secracies.
I knew all the swift importings
 On the wilful face of skies ;

I knew how the clouds arise
 Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings ;
 All that's born or dies
 Rose and drooped with—made them shapers
 Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—
 With them joyed and was bereaven.
 I was heavy with the even,
 When she lit her glimmering tapers
 Round the day's dead sanctities.
 I laughed in the morning's eyes.
 I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
 Heaven and I wept together,
 And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine ;
 Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
 I laid my own to beat,
 And share commingling heat ;
 But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
 In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
 For ah ! we know not what each other says,
 These things and I ; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
 Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth ;
 Let her, if she would owe me,
 Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
 The breasts o' her tenderness :
 Never did any milk of hers once bless
 My thirsting mouth.
 Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
 With unperturbèd pace
 Deliberate speed majestic instancy

And past those noisèd Feet
 A voice comes yet more fleet—
 “Lo! naught contents thee, who content’st not Me.”

Naked I wait Thy love’s uplifted stroke !
 My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
 And smitten me to my knee ;

I am defenceless utterly.
 I slept, methinks, and woke,
 And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
 In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
 I shook the pillaring hours

And pulled my life upon me ; grimed with smears,
 I stand amid the dust o’ the mounded years—
 My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
 My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
 Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream
 The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist ;
 Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
 I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
 Are yielding ; cords of all too weak account
 For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah ! is Thy love indeed
 A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
 Suffering no flowers except its own to mount ?

Ah ! must—
 Designer infinite !—
 Ah ! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn
 with it ?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust ;
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver
 Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is ; what is to be ?
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind ?
 I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds ;
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
 From the hid battlements of Eternity,
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
 Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again ;

But not ere him who summoneth
 I first have seen, enwound
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned ;
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
 Be dunged with rotten death ?

Now of that long pursuit
 Comes on at hand the bruit ;
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea :

“ And is thy earth so marred,
 Shattered in shard on shard ?
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fiest Me !

“ Strange, piteous, futile thing !
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart ?
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught ” (He said),
 “ And human love needs human meriting :

How hast thou merited—
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot ?
 Alack, thou knowest not
 How little worthy of any love thou art !
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
 Save Me, save only Me ?
 All which I took from thee I did but take,
 Not for thy harms,
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
 All which thy child's mistake
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come.”

Halts by me that footfall :
 Is my gloom, after all,
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly ?
 “ Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
 I am He Whom thou seekest !
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.”

A JUDGMENT IN HEAVEN.

ATHWART the sod which is treading for God * the poet
paced with his splendid eyes;
Paradise-verdure he stately passes * to win to the Father
of Paradise,
Through the conscious and palpitant grasses * of inter-
tangled relucent dyes.

The angels a-play on its fields of Summer * (their wild
wings rustled his guides' cymars)
Looked up from disport at the passing comer, * as they
pelted each other with handfuls of stars;
And the warden-spirits with startled feet rose, * hand on
sword, by their tethered cars.

With plumes night-tinctured englobed and cinctured, *
of Saints, his guided steps held on
To where on the far crystalline pale * of that transtellar
Heaven there shone
The immutable crocean dawn * effusing from the Father's
Throne.

NOTE—I have throughout this poem used an asterisk to indicate
the caesura in the middle of the line, after the manner of the old Saxon
section-point.

Through the reverberant Eden-ways * the bruit of his
 great advent driven,
 Back from the fulgent justle and press * with mighty
 echoing so was given,
 As when the surly thunder smites * upon the clangèd
 gates of Heaven.

Over the bickering gonfalons, * far-ranged as for Tar-
 tarean wars,
 Went a waver of ribbèd fire * —as night-seas on phos-
 phoric bars
 Like a flame-plumed fan shake slowly out * their ridgy
 reach of crumbling stars.

At length to where on His fretted Throne * sat in the
 heart of His aged dominions
 The great Triune, and Mary nigh, * lit round with
 spears of their hauberked minions,
 The poet drew, in the thunderous blue * involvèd dread
 of those mounted pinions.

As in a secret and tenebrous cloud * the watcher from
 the disquiet earth
 At momentary intervals * beholds from its raggèd rifts
 break forth
 The flash of a golden perturbation, * the travelling threat
 of a witchèd birth ;

Till heavily parts a sinister chasm, * a grisly jaw, whose
 verges soon,
 Slowly and ominously filled * by the on-coming
 plenilune,
 Supportlessly congest with fire, * and suddenly spit
 forth the moon:—

With beauty, not terror, through tangled error * of
 night-dipt plumes so burned their charge;
 Swayed and parted the globing clusters * so, — dis-
 closed from their kindling marge,
 Roseal-chapleted, splendid-vestured, * the singer there
 where God's light lay large.

Hu, hu! a wonder! a wonder! see, * clasping the singer's
 glories clings
 A dingy creature, even to laughter * cloaked and clad in
 patchwork things,
 Shrinking close from the unused glows * of the seraphs'
 versicoloured wings.

A rhymers, rhyming a futile rhyme, * he had crept for
 convoy through Eden-ways
 Into the shade of the poet's glory, * darkened under his
 prevalent rays,
 Fearfully hoping a distant welcome * as a poor kinsman
 of his lays.

The angels laughed with a lovely scorning: * — “Who
has done this sorry deed in
The garden of our Father, God? * 'mid his blossoms to
sow this weed in?
Never our fingers knew this stuff: * not so fashion the
looms of Eden!”

The singer bowed his brow majestic, * searching that
patchwork through and through,
Feeling God's lucent gazes traverse * his singing-
stoling and spirit too:
The hallowed harpers were fain to frown * on the
strange thing come 'mid their sacred crew,
Only the singer that was earth * his fellow-earth and
his own self knew.

But the poet rent off robe and wreath, * so as a slough-
ing serpent doth,
Laid them at the rhymer's feet, * shed down wreath
and raiment both,
Stood in a dim and shamèd stole, * like the tattered
wing of a musty moth.

“Thou gav'st the weed and wreath of song, * the weed
and wreath are solely Thine,
And this dishonest vesture * is the only vesture that is
mine;
The life *I* textured, Thou the song * — *my* handicraft
is not divine!”

He wrested o'er the rhymer's head * that garmenting
 which wrought him wrong ;
 A flickering tissue argentine * down dripped its shiver-
 ing silvers long :—
 “ Better thou wov'st thy woof of life * than thou didst
 weave thy woof of song ! ”

Never a chief in Saintdom was, * but turned him from
 the Poet then ;
 Never an eye looked mild on him * 'mid all the angel
 myriads ten,
 Save sinless Mary, and sinful Mary * —the Mary titled
 Magdalen.

“ Turn yon robe,” spake Magdalen, * “ of torn bright
 song, and see and feel.”
 They turned the raiment, saw and felt * what their
 turning did reveal—
 All the inner surface piled * with bloodied hairs, like
 hairs of steel.

“ Take, I pray, yon chaplet up, * thrown down ruddied
 from his head.”
 They took the roseal chaplet up, * and they stood
 astonishèd :
 Every leaf between their fingers, * as they bruised it,
 burst and bled.

“ See his torn flesh through those rents ; * see the punc-
tures round his hair,
As if the chaplet-flowers had driven * deep roots in to
 nourish there—
Lord, who gav’st him robe and wreath, * *what* was this
Thou gav’st for wear ? ”

“ Fetch forth the Paradisal garb ! ” * spake the Father,
 sweet and low ;
Drew them both by the frightened hand * where Mary’s
 throne made irised bow—
“ Take, Princess Mary, of thy good grace, * two spirits
 greater than they know.”

EPILOGUE.

VIRTUE may unlock hell, or even
A sin turn in the wards of Heaven,
(As ethics of the text-book go),
So little men their own deeds know,
Or through the intricate *mélée*
 Guess whitherward draws the battle-sway ;
So little, if they know the deed,
 Discern what therefrom shall succeed.
To wisest moralists ’tis but given
 To work rough border-law of Heaven,

Within this narrow life of ours,
 These marches 'twixt delimitless Powers.
 Is it, if Heaven the future showed,
 Is it the all-severest mode
 To see ourselves with the eyes of God ?
 God rather grant, at His assize,
 He see us not with our own eyes !

Heaven, which man's generations draws
 Nor deviates into replicas,
 Must of as deep diversity
 In judgment as creation be.
 There is no expeditious road
 To pack and label men for God,
 And save them by the barrel-load.
 Some may perchance, with strange surprise,
 Have blundered into Paradise.
 In vasty dusk of life abroad,
 They fondly thought to err from God,
 Nor knew the circle that they trod ;
 And wandering all the night about,
 Found them at morn where they set out.
 Death dawned ; Heaven lay in prospect wide :—
 Lo ! they were standing by His side !

The rhymer a life uncomplex,
 With just such cares as mortals vex,
 So simply felt as all men feel,
 Lived purely out to his soul's weal.
 A double life the Poet lived,

And with a double burthen grieved ;
The life of flesh and life of song,
The pangs to both lives that belong ;
Immortal knew and mortal pain,
Who in two worlds could lose and gain,
And found immortal fruits must be
Mortal through his mortality.
The life of flesh and life of song !
If one life worked the other wrong,
What expiating agony
May for him damned to poesy
Shut in that little sentence be—
What deep austerities of strife—
“ He lived his life.” He lived *his* life !

Poems on Children.



DAISY.

WHERE the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
O the breath of the distant surf!—

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea ;
And, with the sea-breeze hand in hand,
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep mid flower and spine :
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way ;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat that day !

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
 On the turf and on the spray ;
 But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
 Was the Daisy-flower that day !

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face !
 She gave me tokens three :—
 A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
 And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
 A still word,—strings of sand !
 And yet they made my wild, wild heart
 Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
 And candid as the skies,
 She took the berries with her hand,
 And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end :
 Their scent survives their close,
 But the rose's scent is bitterness
 To him that loved the rose !

She looked a little wistfully,
 Then went her sunshine way :—
 The sea's eye had a mist on it,
 And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad ;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan ;
For we are born in others' pain,
And perish in our own.

THE MAKING OF VIOLA.

I.

The Father of Heaven.

SPIN, daughter Mary, spin,
Twirl your wheel with silver din ;
Spin, daughter Mary, spin,
Spin a tress for Viola.

Angels.

Spin, Queen Mary, a
Brown tress for Viola !

II.

The Father of Heaven.

Weave, hands angelical,
Weave a woof of flesh to pall—
Weave, hands angelical—
Flesh to pall our Viola.

Angels.

Weave, singing brothers, a
Velvet flesh for Viola !

III.

The Father of Heaven.

Scoop, young Jesus, for her eyes,
Wood-browned pools of Paradise—
Young Jesus, for the eyes,
For the eyes of Viola.

Angels.

Tint, Prince Jesus, a
Duskèd eye for Viola !

IV.

The Father of Heaven.

Cast a star therein to drown,
Like a torch in cavern brown,
Sink a burning star to drown
Whelmed in eyes of Viola.

Angels.

Lave, Prince Jesus, a
Star in eyes of Viola !

V.

The Father of Heaven.

Breathe, Lord Paraclete,
To a bubbled crystal meet—
Breathe, Lord Paraclete—
Crystal soul for Viola.

Angels.

Breathe, Regal Spirit, a
Flashing soul for Viola !

VI.

The Father of Heaven.

Child-angels, from your wings
Fall the roseal hoverings,
Child-angels, from your wings,
On the cheeks of Viola.

Angels.

Linger, rosy reflex, a
Quenchless stain, on Viola !

All things being accomplished, saith the Father of Heaven.

Bear her down, and bearing, sing,
Bear her down on spyless wing,
Bear her down, and bearing, sing,
With a sound of viola.

Angels.

Music as her name is, a
Sweet sound of Viola !

VIII.

Wheeling angels, past espial,
Danced her down with sound of viol ;
Wheeling angels, past espial,
Descanting on “ Viola.”

Angels.

Sing, in our footing, a
Lovely lilt of “ Viola ! ”

IX.

Baby smiled, mother wailed,
Earthward while the sweetling sailed ;
Mother smiled, baby wailed,
When to earth came Viola.

And her elders shall say :—

So soon have we taught you a
Way to weep, poor Viola !

x.

Smile, sweet baby, smile,
For you will have weeping-while ;
Native in your Heaven is smile,—
But your weeping, Viola ?

Whence your smiles we know, but ah !
Whence your weeping, Viola ?—
Our first gift to you is a
Gift of tears, my Viola !

TO MY GODCHILD,

FRANCIS M. W. M.

THIS labouring, vast, Tellurian galleon,
Riding at anchor off the orient sun,
Had broken its cable, and stood out to space
Down some frore Arctic of the aërial ways :
And now, back warping from the inclement main,
Its vaporous shroudage drenched with icy rain,
It swung into its azure roads again ;
When, floated on the prosperous sun-gale, you
Lit, a white halcyon auspice, 'mid our frozen crew.

To the Sun, stranger, surely you belong,
Giver of golden days and golden song ;
Nor is it by an all-unhappy plan
You bear the name of me, his constant Magian.
Yet ah ! from any other that it came,
Lest fated to my fate you be, as to my name.
When at the first those tidings did they bring,
My heart turned troubled at the ominous thing :
Though well may such a title him endower,
For whom a poet's prayer implores a poet's power.
The Assisian, who kept plighted faith to three,
To Song, to Sanctitude, and Poverty,

(In two alone of whom most singers prove
 A fatal faithfulness of during love !);
 He the sweet Sales, of whom we scarcely ken
 How God He could love more, he so loved men ;
 The crown and crowned of Laura and Italy ;
 And Fletcher's fellow—from these, and not from me,
 Take you your name, and take your legacy !

Or, if a right successive you declare
 When worms, for ivies, intertwine my hair,
 Take but this Poesy that now followeth
 My clayey hest with sullen servile breath,
 Made then your happy freedman by testating death.
 My song I do but hold for you in trust,
 I ask you but to blossom from my dust.
 When you have compassed all weak I began,
 Diviner poet, and ah ! diviner man ;
 The man at feud with the perduring child
 In you before song's altar nobly reconciled ;
 From the wise heavens I half shall smile to see
 How little a world, which owned you, needed me.
 If, while you keep the vigils of the night,
 For your wild tears make darkness all too bright,
 Some lone orb through your lonely window peeps,
 As it played lover over your sweet sleeps ;
 Think it a golden crevice in the sky,
 Which I have pierced but to behold you by !

And when, immortal mortal, droops your head,
 And you, the child of deathless song, are dead ;

Then, as you search with unaccustomed glance
The ranks of Paradise for my countenance,
Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod
Among the bearded counsellors of God ;
For if in Eden as on earth are we,
I sure shall keep a younger company :
Pass where beneath their rangèd gonfalons
The starry cohorts shake their shielded suns,
The dreadful mass of their enridgèd spears ;
Pass where majestical the eternal peers,
The stately choice of the great Saintdom, meet—
A silvern segregation, globed complete
In sandalled shadow of the Triune feet ;
Pass by where wait, young poet-wayfarer,
Your cousinsd clusters, emulous to share
With you the roseal lightnings burning 'mid their hair ;
Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven :—
Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven.

T H E P O P P Y.

To MONICA.

SUMMER set lip to earth's bosom bare,
And left the flushed print in a poppy there:
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

With burnt mouth red like a lion's it drank
The blood of the sun as he slaughtered sank,
And dipped its cup in the purpuret shine
When the eastern conduits ran with wine.

Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,
And hot as a swinked gipsy is,
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.

A child and man paced side by side,
Treading the skirts of eventide ;
But between the clasp of his hand and hers
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.

She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,
And saw the sleeping gipsy there ;
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,
With—"Keep it, long as you live!"—to him.

And his smile, as nymphs from their laving meres,
 Trembled up from a bath of tears ;
 And joy, like a mew sea-rocked apart,
 Tossed on the wave of his troubled heart.

For *he* saw what she did not see,
 That—as kindled by its own fervency—
 The verge shrivelled inward smoulderingly :

And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
 He knew the twenty withered years—
 No flower, but twenty shrivelled years.

“Was never such thing until this hour,”
 Low to his heart he said ; “the flower
 Of sleep brings wakening to me,
 And of oblivion memory.”

“Was never this thing to me,” he said,
 “Though with bruised poppies my feet are red !”
 And again to his own heart very low :
 “O child ! I love, for I love and know ;

“But you, who love nor know at all
 The diverse chambers in Love’s guest-hall,
 Where some rise early, few sit long :
 In how differing accents hear the throng
 His great Pentecostal tongue ;

“Who know not love from amity,
 Nor my reported self from me ;
 A fair fit gift is this, meseems,
 You give—this withering flower of dreams.

“O frankly fickle, and fickly true,
 Do you know what the days will do to you ?
 To your Love and you what the days will do,
 O frankly fickle, and fickly true ?

“ You have loved me, Fair, three lives—or days :
 'Twill pass with the passing of my face.
 But where *I* go, your face goes too,
 To watch lest I play false to you.

“ I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
 Knowing well when certain years are over
 You vanish from me to another ;
 Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

“ So, frankly fickle, and fickly true !
 For my brief life-while I take from you
 This token, fair and fit, meseems,
 For me—this withering flower of dreams.”

* * * * *

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,
 Heavy with dreams, as that with bread :
 The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper
 The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
 And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread :
 The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
 Time shall reap, but after the reaper
 The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper !

Love ! love ! your flower of withered dream
In leavèd rhyme lies safe, I deem,
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love ! I fall into the claws of Time :
But lasts within a leavèd rhyme
All that the world of me esteems—
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

TO MONICA THOUGHT DYING.

You, O the piteous you !
Who all the long night through
Anticipatedly
Disclose yourself to me
Already in the ways
Beyond our human comfortable days ;
How can you deem what Death
Impitiable saith
To me, who listening wake
For your poor sake ?
When a grown woman dies
You know we think unceasingly
What things she said, how sweet, how wise ;
And these do make our misery.
But you were (you to me
The dead anticipatedly !)
You—eleven years, was't not, or so ?—
Were just a child, you know ;
And so you never said
Things sweet immeditatably and wise
To interdict from closure my wet eyes :
But foolish things, my dead, my dead !
Little and laughable,

Your age that fitted well.
 And was it such things all unmemorable,
 Was it such things could make
 Me sob all night for your implacable sake ?

Yet, as you said to me,
 In pretty make-believe of revelry,
 So the night long said Death
 With his magniloquent breath ;
 (And that remembered laughter
 Which in our daily uses followed after,
 Was all untuned to pity and to awe) :
 A cup of chocolate,
 One farthing is the rate,
 You drink it through a straw."

How could I know, how know
 Those laughing words when drenched with sobbing so ?
 Another voice than yours, than yours, he hath !
 My dear, was't worth his breath,
 His mighty utterance?—yet he saith, and saith !
 This dreadful Death to his own dreadfulness
 Doth dreadful wrong,
 This dreadful childish babble on his tongue !
 That iron tongue made to speak sentences,
 And wisdom insupportably complete,
 Why should it only say the long night through,
 In mimicry of you,—
 A cup of chocolate,
 One farthing is the rate,

You drink it through a straw, a straw, a straw ! "

Oh, of all sentences,
Piercingly incomplete !

Why did you teach that fatal mouth to draw,

Child, impermissible awe
From your old trivialness ?
Why have you done me this
Most unsustainable wrong,
And into Death's control

Betrayed the secret places of my soul ?

Teaching him that his lips,
Uttering their native earthquake and eclipse,

Could never so avail

To rend from hem to hem the ultimate veil

Of this most desolate

Spirit, and leave it stripped and desecrate,—

Nay, never so have wrung

From eyes and speech weakness unmanned, unmeet ;

As when his terrible dotage to repeat

Its little lesson learneth at your feet ;

As when he sits among

His sepulchres, to play

With broken toys your hand has cast away,

With derelict trinkets of the darling young.

Why have you taught—that he might so complete

His awful panoply

From your cast playthings—why,

This dreadful childish babble to his tongue,

Dreadful and sweet ?





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